

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SEOUL 04540 300837Z
ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10
NSAE-00 PA-01 ICA-11 SP-02 H-01 /043 W
-----011047 300843Z /12
R 300804Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1359
INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO
AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SEOUL 4540

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SHUM PINS KS US JA
SUBJ: PRISONERS: SO CHUN-SIK NOT RELEASED

REF: A. SEOUL 4499, B. STATE 114376

1. TWO AMERICAN STUDENTS FROM OSAKA, JAPAN, JAMES LEWIS AND ELAINE LIPTON, WHO ARE AFFILIATED WITH AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, VISITED EMBASSY AGAIN MAY 30 TO REPORT THAT SO CHUN-SIK (KOREAN RESIDENT OF JAPAN WHO WAS SENTENCED IN 1971 FOR SPYING) HAD NOT BEEN RELEASED UPON EXPIRATION OF HIS SEVEN-YEAR SENTENCE ON MAY 27. LEWIS REPORTED THAT HIS PARTY, INCLUDING REPORTERS FROM JAPAN'S MAINICHI NEWSPAPER AND KYODO NEWS SERVICE, AND CAMERA CREW FROM TOKYO BROADCASTING (TBS-TV) HAD ARRIVED AT CHONJU PRISON ABOUT 0440 MAY 27, WHERE THEY MET SO'S MOTHER AND SISTER. AROUND 0615 THEY WERE TOLD THAT SO HAD BEEN TRANSFERRED THAT MORNING TO TAEJON PRISON.

2. AFTER TRAVELLING TO TAEJON, SO'S MOTHER VISITED HER SON AT ABOUT 1115. SHE SUBSEQUENTLY REPORTED THAT SO, WHO APPEARED IN GOOD HEALTH AND SPIRITS, HAD TOLD HER HE WOULD HAVE TO REMAIN IN PRISON AN ADDITIONAL TWO YEARS, BECAUSE HE "HAD NOT RECANTED." (THIS STEP WAS REPORTEDLY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TAKEN IN ACCORDANCE WITH A SECTION OF THE PUBLIC SECURITY LAW, AS REPORTED REFTEL.) PRISON OFFICIALS REPORTEDLY CONFIRMED TO MRS. SO THAT HER SON WOULD NOT BE RELEASED BUT DID NOT SPECIFY ADDITIONAL PERIOD OF DETENTION.

3. MR. LEWIS STATED HE FEARED SO'S CASE WOULD SET A STRONG AND VERY UNFORTUNATE PRECEDENT IN CASES OF NUMEROUS

OTHER "JAPANESE KOREANS" WHO ARE IN JAIL IN THE ROK.
HE REQUESTED EMBASSY TO APPROACH ROKG TO ARRANGE INTER-
VIEW FOR HIM WITH SO, WHO "HAS NEVER BEEN SEEN BY FOREIGNERS."
EMBOFFS EXPLAINED TO LEWIS THAT EMBASSY HAS NO SPECIAL
STANDING IN THIS CASE, ALTHOUGH WE HAVE FOLLOWED IT
WITH INTEREST, AND ADDED OBSERVATION THAT SUCH AN
APPROACH WAS MORE LIKELY TO HARM RATHER THAN ADVANCE SO'S
PROSPECTS FOR RELEASE. LEWIS SAID HE AND AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL DID NOT AGREE WITH THIS JUDGMENT,
BELIEVING THAT EVIDENCE OF PUBLIC INTEREST WOULD HAVE
BENEFICIAL EFFECT ON SO'S TREATMENT. HE ALSO ASKED TO
BE GIVEN ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON CASE THAT EMBASSY
MIGHT RECEIVE.

4. DUP SOURCE TOLD EMBOFF MAY 30 THAT HE UNDERSTOOD SO'S
MOTHER HAD RESERVED ROOM AT SAINT MARY'S HOSPITAL IN
SEOUL FOR HER SON, SHOULD HE BE RELEASED.
STERN

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Message Attributes

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Channel Indicators: n/a
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Concepts: PRISONER EXCHANGE, POLITICAL PRISONERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 30 may 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780225-0669
Format: TEL
From: SEOUL
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t1978057/aaaaafrc.tel
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Litigation History:
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Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
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